

NATO 2020: A VIABLE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS

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OPERATIONS**

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NATO's essential and enduring purpose has been to safeguard the freedom and security of all members via political and military means. The Strategic Concept is the principal formal statement linking the Alliance's objectives to the various political-military ways and means that constitute its strategy for achieving them. The 2010 Strategic Concept redefines the Alliance's core tasks and principles, identifies the principal characteristics of the new security environment, details the elements of the Alliance's approach to collective security, and provides guidance for the further reform and transformation of its members' military forces. This paper examines the dichotomy between the need for ensuring NATO's security through 2020 by undertaking out-of-area military roles in accordance with the new Strategic Concept and the present-day reality of the alliance members' inability to adequately provide the collective resources or political commitment to achieve the desired strategic end state. It will conclude with suggested recommendations on how the alliance could best align its 2020 strategic vision for the conduct of future expeditionary operations with the stark reality of a 2010 national resource-challenged and political will-threatened environment within NATO.

NATO 2020: A VIABLE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS

At our meeting in Lisbon, we have set a clear course for NATO's next decade. NATO will remain an essential source of stability in an uncertain and unpredictable world. With its new Strategic Concept, NATO will be more effective, more engaged, more efficient, and better able to address the 21st Century security challenges.¹

—Anders Fogh Rasmussen,
NATO Secretary General

It has been just over a decade since the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presented its last formal mission statement. In 1999 the Cold War was still a fresh memory and the 11 September 2001 (9/11) attacks had not yet led to NATO's dedicated commitment to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. Without a clear mission or vision for the first decade of the twenty-first century, NATO has struggled with its own identity as it attempts to transform from a regional defense alliance to a collective security organization with a global focus. On 20 November 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal, the NATO Heads of State and Government adopted the Alliance's most recent Strategic Concept, the principal formal statement linking NATO's objectives to the various political-military means that constitute its strategy for achieving them. Drafted by the Alliance's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept redefines NATO's core tasks and principles, identifies the principal characteristics of the new security environment, details the elements of the Alliance's approach to collective security, and provides guidance for further reform and transformation of its members' military forces. This paper will provide a specific analysis of the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept to determine if the Alliance's vision for the conduct of future out-of-area, or expeditionary, military missions is

adequately aligned with the various political and military ways and means that constitute NATO's strategy for achieving it. It will begin with an overview of NATO's history of successful strategic visions and will conclude with recommendations how the Alliance could best align its 2020 strategic vision for future expeditionary military operations. Woven throughout is the stark reality of a national resource-challenged and political will-threatened environment within NATO.

The North Atlantic Treaty and NATO's Vision to Uphold the Alliance's Principles

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington in 1949, primarily as a military alliance to counter the risk that the Soviet Union would seek to extend its control of Eastern Europe to other parts of the continent. The Treaty commits the members to "faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments." Alliance member nations agree "to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area" through united efforts for collective defense.² Article 3 of the treaty identifies the concept of "burdensharing" as a priority goal in that "the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."³ Article 5 serves as the core of the treaty and declares that an armed attack on one member is to be considered an attack on all. This key component of Alliance collective defense assures each member that NATO will take the actions it deems necessary to assist the attacked Ally.

NATO imparts a strategic vision designed to uphold the principles and values set forth in the 1949 Treaty in the Strategic Concept document. This is the authoritative statement approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the principal political decision-making body that oversees the political and military process relating to security issues

affecting the entire Alliance. The Strategic Concept communicates the highest level of guidance on the political and military means to be used in achieving its objectives. It also identifies the central features of the existing and emerging security environment, specifies the elements of the Alliance's approach to security, and provides guidelines for the adaptation and transformation of its military forces. It equips the Alliance for near-term security challenges and guides its future political and military development. Since 1949, NATO has declared its overall political-military strategy in seven separate Strategic Concepts through three distinct eras: the Cold War; the immediate post-Cold War; and the post-9/11 terrorist attacks period.

Evolution of NATO Strategic Concepts: Cold War (1949-1991)

From 1949 to 1991, NATO strategy was based primarily on defense and deterrence against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. The first NATO strategy established precedence for "a common strategic concept for the defense of the North Atlantic area [that] must serve as the keystone" for military planning.⁴ This first strategy created a large-scale, trans-Atlantic territorial defense strategy. It stated that the primary function of NATO was to deter aggression and Alliance military forces would be engaged only if deterrence measures failed. The initial strategy laid down the ground rules for burdensharing, noting that each member's contribution to defense should be in proportion to its economic, industrial, geographical, and military capacity. Cooperative measures were put into place early on by NATO members to ensure optimal use of resources.⁵ In the mid-1950s the strategy of "massive retaliation" stressed deterrence based on the threat that NATO would respond to any aggression against its member countries, in accordance with Article 5, by every means at its disposal, including nuclear

weapons. As the Cold War proceeded, NATO sought a more positive relationship with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries. The 1970s placed a strategic emphasis on dialogue and détente. By the late 1980s, NATO and the Warsaw Pact gradually moved toward increased dialogue and improved confidence-building measures. Eventually the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union led NATO to formulate an entirely new Strategic Concept.

Evolution of NATO Strategic Concepts: Post-Cold War (1991-1999)

As the Cold War ended, the overall military and political situation in Europe experienced a total transformation and a new Strategic Concept emerged that emphasized cooperation with former enemies. The 1991 Strategic Concept relied on “dialogue, co-operation, and effective collective defence as mutually reinforcing instruments for preserving the peace.”⁶ The 1991 strategy stressed that NATO’s military forces would guarantee the security and territorial integrity of member states while acknowledging a new strategic environment, “in which a single massive and global threat (had) given way to diverse and multi-directional risks.”⁷ The 1991 strategy only slightly resembled the four previous concepts and recognized that a threat could emanate from anywhere. Despite the acceptance of new and diverse risks, NATO sought a “peace-dividend” from forty-two years of cold war. Alliance leaders agreed that future military forces would adapt “accordingly to the new strategic environment... (but) the overall size of the forces, and in many cases their readiness, will be reduced.”⁸

In 1999, NATO presented a new strategy that committed the Alliance to common defense as well as to the peace and stability of the greater trans-Atlantic area. The 1999

strategy acknowledged the importance of defense but recognized potentially dangerous global political, economic, social, and environmental factors.⁹ The 1999 document identified complex new security threats such as terrorism, ethnic conflict, economic distress, political disorder, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery means.¹⁰ The 1999 strategy again stressed that NATO's fundamental tasks were security, consultation, and deterrence and defense (Article 5), but emphasized that crisis management and wide-ranging partnership were essential to enhance the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.¹¹ The 1999 Strategic Concept further developed the ways in which NATO's military forces could be deployed, the resources available for their use, and extensively detailed the missions and guidelines for their employment. Specifically, the document cited the capacity to engage in full-spectrum operations and highlighted that "greater numbers of force elements will be available at appropriate levels of readiness to sustain prolonged operations, whether within or beyond Alliance territory."¹² Finally, the 1999 Strategic Concept stressed that multinational funding would "continue to play an important role in acquiring and maintaining necessary assets and capabilities" and that the "management of resources should be guided by the military requirements of the Alliance as they evolve."¹³ In this capacity, the 1999 NATO Strategic Concept was the first vision to design the criteria for successful attainment of a strategic end state via directed ways and means.

Evolution of the NATO Strategic Concept; Post-9/11

Although NATO did not publish a Post-9/11 Strategic Concept until November 2010, the Alliance produced three principal strategic documents: the "Prague Capabilities Commitment" (PCC), November 2002; the "Comprehensive Political

Guidance” (CPG), November 2006; and the “Declaration on Alliance Security” (DAS), April 2009. Respectively, these documents were designed to increase military capabilities for expeditionary operations; speed military transformation in the areas of capabilities, planning, and intelligence; and reprioritize NATO reform given the strained global economic context.

At the 2002 Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government approved the “Prague Capabilities Commitment” enabling the Alliance to deploy troops quickly to crisis regions, supply and protect those forces, and equip them to engage an adversary. The PCC focused on a small number of goals, emphasized multinational cooperation and specialization, required specific commitments from member states, and directly supported the new NATO Response Force (NRF).¹⁴ The PCC instructed NATO members to make commitments to bolster their capabilities in eight specific areas.¹⁵ For the first time NATO leaders placed an emphasis on multinational commitments and pooling of funds for equipment procurement enabling smaller members to combine resources to purchase hardware that would be unaffordable for each alone. Additionally the 2002 PCC gained consensus among members to spend at least 2% of a nations’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense. Finally this Summit formally adopted the NRF, “a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed” which was “a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance’s military capabilities.”¹⁶

At the 2006 Summit, NATO leaders approved the “Comprehensive Political Guidance,” designated as a “political direction for NATO’s continuing transformation,

setting out, for the next 10 to 15 years, the priorities for all Alliance capability issues, planning disciplines, and intelligence.”¹⁷ The CPG framed the future security environment by expressing that the principal threats to the Alliance in the coming decades were terrorism, WMD proliferation, failing states, regional crises, and the disruption of the flow of vital resources.¹⁸ Against the 2006 threat analysis, the strategy emphasized that NATO must have the operational ability to conduct full-spectrum operations beyond Alliance territory. The CPG specified that NATO needed military forces for expeditionary operations “to respond rapidly to emerging crises (the NRF), effectively reinforce initial entry forces, and sustain the Alliance’s commitment for the duration of the operation.”¹⁹ On this basis, the CPG endorsed political deployability targets; 40% of a member states’ land forces must be deployable and 8% must be sustainable for the duration of out-of-area operations.²⁰ This usability criteria established equal expeditionary operation burdensharing for all member nations, regardless of the size of their military forces. Finally, the CPG underscored that developing the capability of joint expeditionary forces, combined with the ability to deploy and sustain them, would be NATO’s “top priority.”²¹ The CPG effectively presented the means to implement the strategic objectives of current and future out-of-area operations.

At the April 2009 Summit, NATO principals formally agreed that deployable forces prepared to conduct the full range of military operations (ROMO) would strengthen the Alliance’s ability to confront twenty-first century threats and approved the final key strategic document of the Post-9/11 period, the “Declaration on Alliance Security.”²² This declaration tasked “the Secretary General to convene and lead a broad-based group of qualified experts (to) lay the ground for the Secretary General to

develop a new Strategic Concept.”²³ In the declaration, NATO leaders proclaimed that the UN-mandated, ISAF expeditionary mission in Afghanistan is NATO’s key strategic priority and acknowledged that security in Europe is closely tied to Afghan security and stability. Finally, the DAS stressed that to meet present and future security challenges, the Allies must share risks and responsibilities more equitably, make military capabilities more flexible and deployable, and “reform NATO structures to create a leaner and more cost-effective organization.”²⁴

The Road to Lisbon and a 2010 New NATO Strategic Concept

In August 2009, the new NATO Secretary General (SECGEN), Anders Fogh Rasmussen, announced his plan to see NATO reach its full potential as a pillar of global security through the implementation of a comprehensive new Strategic Concept. He appointed a twelve-member, Euro-Atlantic Group of Experts (GOE) chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Madeleine Albright, to conduct a strategic analysis and provide recommendations for a final formal document. He tasked these experts to conduct a two-phase strategic study consisting of “reflection” and “consultation” phases. The group consulted with national governments, civilian and military officials, think tanks, NGOs, and other international organizations internal and external to NATO. Finally, the SECGEN personally led the third and final phase of strategy development by seeking consensus approval with the Alliance’s member-nation governments.²⁵

On May 17, 2010 the GOE delivered its report to SECGEN Rasmussen emphasizing that between 2010 and 2020, NATO’s purpose will be “assured security” for all its members but can only achieve that objective if it embraces “dynamic engagement” with those outside its boundaries to minimize threats. The GOE analysis

and recommendation document is an example of Strategic Design methodology. The assembled experts framed the strategic environment, identified the potential problems facing NATO in the next decade, and developed a broad strategic approach to accomplish near-term strategic objectives. Ultimately they provided the SECGEN implementation suggestions based on the contemporary austere conditions of available collective resources. Secretary Albright's group cautioned, however, that to succeed both politically and militarily, "NATO must have the sustained commitment and united effort of its members."²⁶

In defining a strategic approach to respond to global threats, the GOE analysis revealed that NATO expeditionary operations are inevitable. The report stated that "an effective defence against security threats must begin well beyond the territory of the Alliance."²⁷ As the strategic environment changes, the GOE shrewdly advised that NATO will need a "transformation in military capabilities ...and a more streamlined and efficient Alliance structure" to conduct effective out-of-area operations and accomplish its military missions in the coming decade.²⁸

Expeditionary Operations Essentials: Popular Support and Successful Transformation

The GOE asserted that NATO's defense priorities must include "the capacity to undertake demanding missions at strategic distance, help shape the international security landscape, and respond to unpredictable contingencies when and where that is required."²⁹ The experts forecasted that by 2020 one of NATO's primary military missions, other than to deter, prevent, and defend against threat of aggression (Article 5) will be "to deploy and sustain expeditionary capabilities for military operations beyond the treaty area when required... or to protect the legal rights and other vital interests of

Alliance members.”³⁰ The GOE report highlighted that NATO leaders must be open in deliberations while clearly explaining specific goals and rationale for NATO participation in military operations if the Alliance desires popular and parliamentary support to execute missions abroad.

Albright’s group criticized member nations whose military forces’ capabilities transformation initiatives have moved forward too slowly to reach agreed guidelines. The GOE underscored that the primary factor hindering military transformation has been the lack of European defense spending and investment; only four of twenty-six European Allies spend 2% or more of GDP on these requirements. The gap is particularly large between U.S. capabilities and the rest of NATO, a burdensharing imbalance that if left unchecked could weaken Alliance cohesion. Furthermore military personnel and operational costs consume European defense spending disproportionately, leaving European forces without enough transformed forces capable of conducting sustained expeditionary operations.³¹ When reporting the GOE findings to the NAC, Dr. Albright emphasized that NATO “should speed up transformation by developing sustainable, deployable and interoperable military forces, improve its capacity for rapid response, and increase its commitment to common funding.”³²

The GOE report provided Secretary General Rasmussen with a comprehensive approach for achieving a vision through “assured security” and “dynamic engagement.” The Experts, however, concluded that if NATO is to be effective in meeting its objectives for collective security via military means by 2020, the Alliance must “halt the precipitous decline in national defence spending, implement new reforms and efficiencies, and set priorities for future capabilities” while retaining the ability to act

beyond its territorial limits.³³ The road to the 2010 Lisbon Summit was not easy for the SECGEN as he refined and negotiated the GOE recommendations with twenty-eight member nation governments for consensus and personally drafted the new Strategic Concept.

The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept: Overview and Expeditionary Operations Focus

As he presented the new Strategic Concept in Lisbon on 19 November 2010, the SECGEN described it as the “vision for an evolving Alliance that will remain able to defend its members against modern threats and commits NATO to become more agile, more capable and more effective.”³⁴ To the assembled heads of state and government, he stressed that the new Strategic Concept “is an action plan... which sets out clearly the concrete steps NATO will take. It will put in place an Alliance that is more effective, more engaged and more efficient than ever before.”³⁵ The 2010 Strategic Concept is an extremely concise declaration of NATO’s core tasks and principles, its values, the evolving security environment, and the Alliance’s strategic objectives for the coming decade. Through ongoing NATO reform, the 2010 Strategic Concept envisions making NATO more effective by concentrating on key capabilities such as expeditionary forces; more engaged, by collaborating with partner countries and other international organizations; and more efficient, by making the best use of taxpayer funds.³⁶

The final concept ultimately captured the GOE recommendations to draft a strategy document that assures defense and security through dynamic engagement while clearly laying out ends, ways, and means of the vision. In the new Strategic Concept, NATO’s fundamental and enduring “ends” are to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members, via political and military means, and describe what the Alliance’s Armed Forces are expected to accomplish given the relationship of those

objectives to the modern strategic security environment. NATO's redefined core tasks and principles are the "ways" of the strategy and describe how the Alliance's Armed Forces will conduct military expeditionary operations to accomplish the specified military objectives. Finally, the Strategic Concept broadly describes reforming NATO's military capabilities, or the "means," required to achieve its objectives in an era of limited defense spending.

As with previous Strategic Concepts, the 2010 version outlines three essential core tasks that contribute to safeguarding NATO Alliance members: Collective Defense (Defense and Deterrence); Crisis Management (Security through Crisis Management); and Cooperative Security (Promoting International Security through Cooperation).³⁷ In the execution of these core tasks, NATO's new strategy pledges to effectively and efficiently perform across the full range of military operations and engage in a continuous process of reform, modernization, and transformation. Furthermore, the Allies will continue to defend the Alliance together, "on the basis of solidarity, shared purpose and fair burdensharing."³⁸

Article 5 of the 1949 Treaty asserts that the primary core competency of the Alliance is to collectively protect and defend its territory and populations against attack. To ensure that the Alliance has the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat, the 2010 Strategic Concept specifies that NATO will "develop and maintain robust, mobile and deployable conventional forces to carry out both our Article 5 responsibilities and the Alliance's expeditionary operations, including with the NATO Response Force."³⁹ Furthermore, NATO leaders agree to "sustain the necessary levels of defence spending, so that our armed forces are sufficiently resourced."⁴⁰

The second core competency detailed in the 2010 strategy is the necessity to maintain collective security through crisis management. Crises and conflicts beyond NATO's borders pose a direct threat to the security of the Alliance and NATO will therefore need to internationally engage "to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction."⁴¹ The 2010 Strategic Concept asserts that NATO will be prepared to engage in hostilities if diplomacy proves unsuccessful and stresses that NATO-led operations, such as peacekeeping in the Balkans, counterpiracy in the Gulf of Aden, counterterrorism in the Mediterranean Sea, training in Iraq, and combat in Afghanistan, "have demonstrated the indispensable contribution the Alliance can make to international conflict management efforts."⁴² Finally, the new Strategic Concept pledges to "further develop doctrine and military capabilities for expeditionary operations, including counterinsurgency, stabilization and reconstruction operations" to be effective across the crisis management ROMO.⁴³

The final core competency detailed in the 2010 Strategic Concept specifies ways the Alliance will promote international security through cooperation and partnerships in pursuit of mutual security interests with countries and organizations such as the United Nations and European Union (EU). Though all efforts to enhance Euro-Atlantic cooperative security are significant, the most important in the immediate "ends, ways and means" discussion is the NATO-EU military relationship which "play complementary and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security."⁴⁴ NATO's new strategy strives to "cooperate more fully in capability development, to minimise duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness" as twenty-one of the twenty-eight members of NATO are EU members and compete for valuable defense financing.⁴⁵

The final point of the 2010 Security Concept commits Alliance members to continuous internal reform and transformation towards a more effective, efficient, and flexible Alliance, so that taxpayers get the most security for the money invested in defense. The document spells out that “NATO must have sufficient resources – financial, military and human – to carry out missions” essential to Alliance security.⁴⁶ Between 2010 and 2020, NATO will maximize the ability to deploy its military forces; reduce unnecessary duplication; develop and operate capabilities jointly for cost-effectiveness; and “engage in a process of continual reform to streamline (command) structures... and maximise efficiency.”⁴⁷ At the conclusion of the 2010 Summit in Lisbon, NATO Heads of State and Government published a declaration formally adopting the Strategic Concept and agreed to reform the Alliance’s command structure by the June 2011 Defense Ministerial Summit.

NATO Post-Lisbon Summit: Expeditionary Operations, Resources and Burdensharing

Preceding the straightforward language contained within the 2010 Strategic Concept, political tension existed between member nations concerning divergent opinions about NATO’s roles and missions in the world, the costs versus benefits of defense spending through 2020, and increased burdensharing. Recently defense analysts argued that “different threat perceptions, together with the lack of political will to deploy sufficient troops... or to invest in sufficient expeditionary capabilities are symptoms of NATO’s current crisis.”⁴⁸ Others, including U.S. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Robert Gates, warned that NATO “cannot become a two-tiered Alliance” where one part of the Alliance concentrates on territorial defense, while the other focuses on cooperative security via expeditionary military capacity.⁴⁹

Since 1999, Central and Eastern European NATO members have voiced concerns about refocusing NATO away from “traditional” Article 5 operations, preferring instead to concentrate on preparing the Alliance to defend European territory against conventional attacks. However, NATO specialists argue that in terms of the forces, training, and equipment needed for in- or out-of-area operations, there is little difference between the necessary defense capabilities.⁵⁰ U.S. military expert Dr. David Yost states “the dichotomy between expeditionary and territorial defense capabilities has been overstated. The continued development of expeditionary capabilities is a priority for both collective defense and crisis response contingencies.”⁵¹ Accordingly, the 2010 Strategic Concept, fully endorsed by all NATO governments in Lisbon, will contribute to ending intra-Alliance political disparity and will put this false dichotomy to rest. The SECGEN and NATO leaders affirmed the principle that in- and out-of-area operations are core functions of the Alliance. They agreed that all member nations will develop strengthened national expeditionary capacity because military operations outside of the trans-Atlantic region are more than likely to occur than missions inside the territory given the anticipated geostrategic environment.

Similarly, internal disputes about the mismatch between budgetary requirements for defense spending and the amount of resources member nations are ready to provide has been a consistent debate within NATO and among Alliance members since the Cold War ended. It could only escalate as economic conditions grow more austere. NATO commitments, such as the 2002 PCC consensus to spend at least 2% of a nations’ Gross Domestic Product on defense, have been agreed upon but not fully been put into effect by the majority of Alliance members and have pitted the U.S. against

smaller European allies. In February 2010, during a NATO Strategic Concept Seminar in Washington, Secretary Gates stated,

budget limitations relate to a larger cultural and political trend affecting the alliance... The demilitarization of Europe – where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it – has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st.⁵²

Not surprisingly these rather blunt remarks by the U.S. SECDEF were not well-received in Europe. In 2009, however, just four of Europe's twenty-five NATO members spent the Alliance's goal of 2% of GDP on defense (see Table 1). In 2010, the number of countries slipped to three as the trend continues downward:

NATO* Defense Budget Spending as % of GDP ^{53, 54}							
Country	2009	2010	% Δ	Country	2009	2010	% Δ
Albania	2.0%	1.7%	-0.3%	Lithuania	1.1%	0.9%	-0.2%
Belgium	1.2%	0.8%	-0.4%	Luxembourg	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Bulgaria	1.9%	1.5%	-0.4%	Netherlands	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%
Canada	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	Norway	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%
Croatia	1.6%	1.4%	-0.2%	Poland	1.7%	1.9%	0.2%
Czech Republic	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%	Portugal	1.6%	1.5%	-0.1%
Denmark	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	Romania	1.4%	1.3%	-0.1%
Estonia	1.9%	1.8%	-0.1%	Slovak Republic	1.5%	1.3%	-0.2%
France	2.1%	2.0%	-0.1%	Slovenia	1.6%	1.4%	-0.2%
Germany	1.4%	1.3%	-0.1%	Spain	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%
Greece	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%	Turkey	1.8%	1.6%	-0.2%
Hungary	1.1%	1.2%	0.1%	United Kingdom	2.7%	2.7%	0.0%
Italy	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	United States	4.0%	4.7%	0.7%
Latvia	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	*Iceland omitted			

Table 1

The way forward to increase European defense spending will not be easy given that defense outlays by NATO's European member nations have shrunk by forty-five billion dollars over the past two years. SECDEF Rasmussen recently acknowledged that NATO Allies have started the new decade further apart in terms of defense

investment; “ten years ago, the United States accounted for just under half of NATO members’ total defence spending. Today the American share is closer to 75 percent – and it will continue to grow, even with the new cuts in the Pentagon’s spending.”⁵⁵ The recently published 2011 U.S. National Military Strategy (NMS) recognizes that even though “NATO will remain the most powerful military alliance, some of its states are reducing defense spending as part of broader austerity measures.”⁵⁶ The NMS goes on to warn that “these reductions may impact partner nations’ contributions to our collective security.”⁵⁷ NATO members must place a greater emphasis on European and international security, both in terms of resourcing defense spending and in terms of political will. By agreeing in Lisbon to commit to necessary levels of defense spending for their armed forces, NATO chiefs determined in principle to meet these responsibilities between now and 2020.

Nevertheless, the burdensharing argument beleaguering NATO since its inception goes beyond proportionate disparity in meeting fiscal responsibilities. Current debates such as deployability, usability targets, common funding, or national caveats did not play a role in the historic cost-sharing disputes of the Cold War.⁵⁸ As NATO progresses from a regional defense alliance to a collective security organization with a global focus, so do the boundaries of equitable fiscal contributions. The 2010 Strategic Concept asserts that the Allies will continue to defend the Alliance together, “on the basis of solidarity, shared purpose and fair burdensharing.” However, as former SECGEN Jaap de Hoop Scheffer suggested, solidarity “implies the willingness to accept sacrifice and share burdens” and “the degree of solidarity that a nation wants to render today is very much at its own discretion.”⁵⁹ He furthered that the test of the Alliance in

the coming decade will lie “in its ability to convince Allies to show the necessary solidarity and to increase their willingness to share burdens equitably.”⁶⁰

Presently in Afghanistan, the use of national caveats placed on the deployment of troops is the most visible manifestation of a NATO member nation's lack of will to share military and political burdens. For example, some Alliance members contribute substantial numbers of troops and equipment, such as Germany, Italy, and Turkey, but restrict them to certain missions or geographic areas. Significant military contributions give a strong political appearance of burdensharing and solidarity, but in reality “German troops are effectively barred by their parliament from operating outside the relatively safe northern region” and the Turks cannot deploy outside Kabul.⁶¹ Senior defense policy analyst Sally McNamara argues that in Afghanistan these national caveats have created a two-tiered alliance in which some NATO member nations’ soldiers fight and die and others’ do not. McNamara asserts that “the EU’s “big four” continental nations of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain combined have suffered less than half the number of combat deaths suffered by the UK alone” as a result of inequitable political burdensharing.⁶² In the coming decade, it will be difficult for a few Alliance members to sustain a disproportionate share of the burden if NATO is to remain politically and militarily cohesive in Afghanistan through 2014 and beyond. Now that the excitement of the Lisbon Summit has subsided, it is time for all NATO member nations to match their vows with solid commitments and begin a vital transformation.

NATO Defense Reform Recommendations: Expeditionary Operations

To more effectively take on expeditionary operations in the next decade, NATO must agree to a force posture structure to undertake both territorial defense and

expeditionary missions. Military forces for conventional Article 5 missions, as well as expeditionary capabilities, must be strengthened for NATO to protect its territory and act beyond its boundaries to ensure the Alliance's security. National forces will have to be restructured to become more deployable and sustainable. For example the 50% deployable and 10% sustainable deployability criteria thresholds must be revised and applied to an entire force. Costs for restructuring forces could be recouped by eliminating low-priority infrastructure projects, modernizing legacy systems, and realigning manpower and/or readiness of national forces designed only for territorial defense.⁶³ To enhance capabilities for expeditionary operations, NATO should do more to undertake organizational reforms and innovations by encouraging countries to focus on role specialization and niche-area capabilities. For example, NATO might encourage new members to focus on critical combat support missions such as logistics or medical support and other areas where they excel. Recently SECGEN Rasmussen highlighted the niche-area success of Norway's focus on growing Special Forces capabilities and mine-clearing teams and the Czech Republic's specialized work in defense against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear weapons.⁶⁴ Other nations could likewise pursue enhanced special operations assets, improved post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction assets, and stronger civilian surge capabilities.⁶⁵

NATO Defense Reform Recommendations: Resources and Burdensharing

The 2010 Strategic Concept stressed the Alliance's commitment to reducing unnecessary duplication and operating capabilities jointly for cost-effectiveness. The pooling of limited national resources to develop strategic transport, precision-guided munitions, refueling tankers, tactical helicopters, medical support, logistics, or

surveillance/reconnaissance programs for expeditionary operations are the most critical capability reforms required by NATO where cost-saving measures could be applied. Secretary Gates suggests developing new ways to obtain capabilities through “multinational procurement, more common funding, or reallocating resources based on collective rather than national priorities,” such as Denmark has done by eliminating their submarine fleet to increase capacity for expeditionary forces, may be the best means for ensuring greater security at a fraction of the cost.⁶⁶

U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, advocates “by pooling resources, Allies are able to provide greater security for their populations and territories than when acting alone.”⁶⁷ SECGEN Rasmussen reiterated during the February 2011 Munich Security Conference that NATO must continue to pursue pooling through acquisition, common use capabilities, and role sharing by respectively citing examples of the twelve-nation C-17 Strategic Airlift Capability, the former Soviet-type helicopters that are being upgraded to NATO standards, and several nations taking turns to patrol the airspace of the Baltic region, which allows NATO’s three Baltic states to invest in expeditionary forces.⁶⁸ Rasmussen was especially praiseworthy of the November 2010 bilateral French-British “Declaration on Defence and Security Co-operation.” This agreement will develop the pooling of equipment, materials, facilities and manpower, most notably by sharing one another’s aircraft carriers, and create a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force that will incorporate land, maritime, and air components deployable for expeditionary operations.⁶⁹ American Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy commended the initiative as “one example of countries finding creative ways to pool resources and capabilities” and encouraged other allies to “seek similar

opportunities where appropriate.”⁷⁰ By 2020 NATO pooling initiatives must concentrate on pursuing access to strategic air transport, fast-deployment cargo ships, and multinational logistic support assets to support future expeditionary operations.⁷¹ Given the budget problems inherent in today’s national resource-challenged and political will-threatened environment, NATO must be supportive of more pooling agreements among its members and partners, such as the unique treaty between France and the UK.

Similarly SECGEN Rasmussen is cognizant of European burdensharing shortfalls. In a blunt message to European members of NATO at the start of the Lisbon Summit, he addressed a forum suggesting that “crisis-driven cuts in European defense spending threaten to turn the continent into a ‘paper tiger’ in military matters and saddle the U.S. with an excessive burden.”⁷² Aside from the obvious reform recommendation to “strongly urge” European Alliance members to increase defense spending to at least the 2% of GDP level previously established, NATO should support common funding for expeditionary operations. For example, Alliance members currently fund contributions to most NATO operations from national defense budgets. This custom makes it harder and more expensive for member nations to generate resources and domestic political will to participate in expeditionary missions or contribute forces to the NRF.⁷³ Common NATO funding for doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities for NRF-designated forces would be a worthwhile place to institute enhanced common funding for operations and reduce burdensharing for expeditionary missions.

Additional burdensharing reform measures for expeditionary operations could be realized in strengthening the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU as the

2010 Strategic Concept proposes.⁷⁴ NATO and the EU should share security and defense Civilian-Military resources while developing mutually reinforcing capabilities to relieve military forces from performing traditional civilian functions in supporting international peace and security missions. Specifically, the EU should design ways to provide its civilian expertise to NATO military operations, such as undertaking civilian security work in the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. Likewise NATO should look for ways to reciprocally provide military assets to EU operations when appropriate.⁷⁵ Overall an enhanced strategic NATO-EU partnership would deliver significant political, financial and operational benefits eventually reducing financial tensions among Allies.

NATO Defense Reform Recommendations: Interoperability and Transformation

The 2010 Strategic Concept points out that NATO will maximize the ability to deploy its military forces and focus on military interoperability for expeditionary operations.⁷⁶ NATO must employ greater doctrinal transformation by engaging in multinational training, education, and exercise programs, and by encouraging member information-sharing on national practices.⁷⁷ Fostering improved interoperability for all Alliance militaries in the warfare domains of ground, air, maritime, space, cyberspace, and special operations forces are essential for successful expeditionary operations. As such, the NRF should be strengthened and more emphasis should be placed on regularly scheduled NRF training exercises leveraging the state-of-the-art training facilities at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center of Excellence for Coalition Training in Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany.

Finally, the Strategic Concept broadly describes reforming NATO's military structures, or the means required to achieve its objectives in an era of limited defense

spending. NATO leaders agreed in Lisbon to “engage in a process of continual reform to streamline (command) structures... and maximise efficiency.”⁷⁸ The implication for NATO is to improve readiness and capacities of current joint force commands to carry out future expeditionary operations. To achieve these reforms, NATO should create a deployable and sustainable command and control capability within the NATO Command Structure for operational contingencies.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The 2010 Strategic Concept successfully revises NATO’s core competencies and provides the Alliance with a viable new strategy for conducting expeditionary operations in the next decade. NATO inevitably will be more effective, more engaged, more efficient, and better able to conduct out of area expeditionary military operations if this vision is put into practice. This new strategy embraces Alliance rejuvenation and provides strategic direction to confront the immense range of external and internal threats challenging its well-being. The 2010 Strategic Concept will be able to shape the immediate future of the Alliance only if serious defense reform measures are put into action. Defense Ministers must consent to an implementing plan by the June 2011 Defense Ministerial Summit to realize critical defense capabilities required to meet the vision of the new Strategic Concept. Without increased political will for conducting full-spectrum expeditionary military operations and a secure commitment to sharing the burden of collective defense more equitably, the 2010 Strategic Concept risks becoming a paper tiger itself. In February 2010, Secretary Gates declared:

This alliance has shown that it can evolve with the times – that it can be relevant and indeed irreplaceable even as the contours of the strategic landscape have changed in dramatic ways. Our task today is to uphold the

long legacy that has made NATO the most successful military alliance in history.⁸⁰

NATO must now match its level of ambition to concrete proposals and align its strategic end state to available ways and means if it is to remain the most successful military alliance in history.

Endnotes

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